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SELF-POLLUTION,

THE

CAUSE OF YOUTHFUL DECAY:

SHOWING THE

DANGERS AND REMEDY

OF

VENEREAL EXCESS.

BY DR. L. D. FLEMING.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

PERHAPS no one thing serves more effectually to degrade human beings, increase human misery, and shorten human life, than the *soul-debasing vice*, treated upon in this work; and yet how few there are to come to the rescue, and make an effort to stay the ravages of this blighting curse, and "*beard the lion in his den.*" The general ignorance on this subject, in regard to its extent, and its effects, serves only to increase the difficulty of trying to remedy the evil. Physicians frequently find themselves greatly embarrassed, in consequence of the fastidiousness and ignorance of parents. Mrs. Mary S. Gove, in

her "Lectures to Ladies, on Anatomy and Physiology," says—

"A short time since, I was conversing with a physician, who seemed to feel deeply on this subject. 'But,' said he, 'what can I do; I dare not offend parents, by telling them the habits of their children. Only the other day,' said he, 'I was called to a youth who was destroying himself by this practice, but I dare not mention it.'"

The above represents the true state of the case, and proves the necessity of more general information on the subject. The writer has, doubtless, frequently offended parents by suggesting his opinions on this subject. But what is to be done? Shall we look upon the rapid and premature decline of the rising generation, and hold our peace, simply because we fear to offend? Shall we refuse to do justice to the wound, because it will cause pain to probe it to the bottom? I know it is unpleasant; it requires

the exercise of moral courage. But some one must do it, if it be done at all. It is a duty we owe to truth, and to humanity: and it is under the influence of these considerations that I have decided to send forth this little Messenger. I know, quite a number of works are published, presenting the claims of this subject, yet the effort, in the aggregate, is totally insignificant, when compared with the evil.

This little work is sent forth to assist in this exigency. It should be placed in the hands of the young, nay, of all who are in ignorance on the subject of which it treats, to advise them of the baneful influence of an abhorrent vice. It is designed to be couched in language, not to offend the modesty of any, and yet so lucid as to be sufficiently understood by even the youngest for whose benefit it is written. Every Parent and Guardian is in duty bound to throw around those entrusted to their care, every possible barrier to

vice, and safeguard to virtue. Let them commence the work ere the enemy has won the field, and fortified every out-post. May the blessing of Heaven attend this little Messenger, and make it a word in season to thousands of the rising generation, and an healing ointment to suffering humanity!

CHAPTER I.

Masturbation—Its Prevalence, &c.

It has not been without mature deliberation, and the request and counsel of the best friends of the rising generation, that I have taken upon me the task of laying before the young, the subject of the following pages. I do it, because it is all-important that the young should be correctly and faithfully instructed in the matter. It is certain, too, that parents, teachers, guardians, and even the members of the medical profession, are not duly aroused to the fearful extent of the habit of Masturbation, and the dangers arising from it.

The general opinion, that the young are, most of them, unacquainted with the vice of *Self-Pollution*, sometimes called *Onanism*, and *Solitary Indulgence*, and that they should be left in that ignorance, is a great mistake. "I am confident," says a distinguished writer, on this subject, "that I speak within bounds, when I say that seven out of every ten boys in our country, at

the age of twelve, have at least heard of this pernicious practice: and I say, again, the extent to which it prevails in our public schools and colleges, is shocking beyond measure. I have known boys to leave some of these institutions at the age of twelve and thirteen, almost entirely ruined in health and constitution, by it; and they have assured me, that, to their certain knowledge, almost every boy in the school, practised the filthy vice."

Another celebrated physician says—"This vice is *almost universal*, the exceptions to it being very rare, particularly in the rising generation. I believe it may be safely asserted, that *ninety-nine out of every hundred* are addicted to it! And such are the circumstances in which young people are now placed, that, instead of its decreasing, it is every day becoming more confirmed and extended."

It is a kind of licentiousness which requires the consent of no second person, and hence it may go on unrestrained. It is a licentiousness, too, which is probably second to no other, in the terribleness of its effects. Few people are aware of its awful consequences upon the physical,

moral, and mental powers. Those who have not acquainted themselves with the subject, can scarcely believe, or even form an idea of its fearful effects. It may be classed among the *master evils* of the present day. It probably leads to more disease of body and mind, and more premature decay, than any other one evil. If it be asked how this can be, I answer—because it lays the axe at the root of the tree. It commences its inroads upon the system while it is yet tender—at a time when excesses are far more pernicious to the health and constitution than at any other period of life. It is generally commenced in youth, and very frequently even in childhood. Sometimes it is practised by children of eight or nine years of age, and in some cases even earlier.

Dr. Adam Clarke, in allusion to this great evil, writes as follows—

"The sin of *self-pollution* is one of the most destructive evils ever practised by fallen man. In many respects it is several degrees worse than common whoredom, and has in its train more awful consequences. It excites the power of nature to *undue action*, and produces *violent secretions*, which necessarily and speedily *exhaust the vital principle and energy*; hence the muscles become flaccid and feeble, the tone and natural action of the nerves re-

laxed and impeded, the understanding confused, the memory oblivious, the judgment perverted, the will indeterminate and wholly without energy to resist; the eyes appear languishing and without expression, and the countenance vacant; *appetite ceases*, for the stomach is incapable of performing its proper office; *nutrition fails*; tremors, fears, and terrors, are generated; and thus the wretched victim drags out a miserable existence, till, *superannuated*, even before he had time to arrive at *man's estate*, with a mind often debilitated even to a state of idiotism, his worthless body tumbles into the grave, and his guilty soul (guilty of self-murder) is hurried into the awful presence of its Judge!

"Reader, this is no caricature, nor are the colorings over-charged in this shocking picture. Worse woes than my pen can relate, I have witnessed in those addicted to this fascinating, unnatural, and most destructive of crimes. If thou hast entered into the snare, flee from the destruction both of body and mind, that awaits thee! God alone can save thee. Advice, warnings, threatenings, increasing debility of body, mental decay, checks of conscience, expostulations of judgment, and medical assistance will all be lost on thee: God, and God *alone*, can save thee from an evil which has in its issue the destruction of thy body, and the final perdition of thy soul!"

There are reasons for supposing that this *Solitary Vice* is about as general with one sex as the other. Generally no such thing is suspected; and when parents and guardians are told, they can scarcely believe it, and indeed will not credit it, till their own observation convinces them. Physicians frequently suspect the cause of the wasting and feebleness and decay

of the young, but for fear of offending the parents, they neglect to state their convictions in the matter. I have myself suggested to fathers the possibility that such might be the difficulty, when they have come to consult me in reference to the declining health of their sons · and they have not only totally disbelieved it, but seemed offended that such a thought should be entertained. But the sequel has proved that my apprehensions were too true.

I am constantly becoming more and more convinced that this should become a subject of education. The whole community should be enlightened on it, so that the young may be advised and admonished before it is too late. Youth, generally, commence this awful habit without suspecting its dreadful consequences, or its moral turpitude; and ere they are aware, they are completely enslaved to a loathsome demon. A gentle hint from a parent, or a friend, may be effectual in saving the child from the abyss. A word of caution in the form of a tract, may save thousands from a fatal snare, and a premature grave. Wherever the young are congregated, as in schools, factories, &c.,

particular care should be taken to have them duly advised in this matter. Such places are the most fruitful sources of instruction in this vicious habit, especially colleges, boarding-schools, &c. The descriptions I have myself had from the pupils themselves, are most abhorrent. The facts are almost beyond credibility. And yet, how comparatively little effort is made to put a stop to this cataract of physical and moral evil. And is it not strange, that, notwithstanding we have such a superabundance of evidence to the truth of these things, many *would-be-wise* people, will totally condemn any effort to restrain this growing evil? They look upon the circulation of such a work as this, as an abomination! But away, we say, with such affected fastidiousness.

What parent's heart would not recoil with unaffected horror, in view of the snares that lay in the path of a dear child that they were about to send to an institution of learning, if they fully realized the dangers of this character that were to surround it; and, especially, if there were no safeguard to be thrown around it? Nothing is clearer, than, that there is no safety in such

circumstances without instruction and advice, adapted to the case.

The object of this little work is to give in plainness and confidence the necessary admonition to the young. I trust, also, that it will be no less salutary in its influence on many adults—nay, even on many parents.

The subject under consideration, is the excitement of the sexual feeling by artificial means. This is generally done by the hand, though sometimes by other agencies, assisted by a greatly excited imagination. It is probable, however, that the reader will understand me without further explanation.

Strange as it may appear, this abominable vice has been taught to children by nurses, and *even by parents themselves.* Says Mr. Graham,

"One of the most melancholy and remediless cases I ever knew, commenced in very early childhood, under the care, and by the immediate instruction of a nurse, and before the boy was old enough to know the dangers of the practice, the habit had become so powerful, that he was wholly unable to resist it; and when he had reached the age of twenty, with a broken-down constitution, with a body full of disease, and with a mind in ruins, the loathsome habit still tyranized over him with the inexorable imperiousness of a fiend of darkness."

Although, as a general thing, the young are

first led to this habit through the influence of others, it is not always the case. A precocious development of the parts, produces some excitement and irritation, in trying to relieve which, a sensation is produced that may in the end lead to the habit in question. Timely and proper instruction and advice, would preserve them from the evil. But being at first entirely ignorant of the nature of the sensations, and the consequences of its indulgence, they are left to its growing power, till they are unable, almost, to resist it. In the majority of cases, probably, they are not aware of their condition, or the nature of the habit, till they purchase the knowledge at an unutterable price.

Is it *just*—is it HUMANE, to let such an enormity go unrebuked? Is it not the imperative duty of every friend of his race to try and contribute something toward the redemption of the rising generation from such a great calamity? Is it consistent with true philanthropy to leave the young, or any others, indeed, to be preyed upon and ruined by this hidden and unsuspected evil, without giving them a word of warning? I leave the reader to answer these questions for

himself. I leave it for the fastidious fault-finder to decide *which is preferable*—WHICH IS RIGHT, to leave the ignorant *in* their ignorance on this subject, because it is a delicate one; or, plainly and faithfully as a friend, to lay before them the true nature of the case?

I often think of the expression of a young man of my acquaintance, into whose hands I put a little work on this subject. After reading the book, he came to me, and in an emphatic manner, and as though he thought I had greatly neglected my duty, said "*Why did you not give me this information before; I was never aware of its evil tendency.*" I then determined to try and do something toward enlightening the young and the ignorant, on this subject, and toward staying the torrent of evil.

The symptoms which indicate this vice, are ill health, paleness, a downcast look, great debility, a disposition to be alone, jealousy of those, even, whom they have regarded as friends,—peevishness and irritability. Also, a languor and feebleness, frequently attributed to a rapid growth, a disinclination to labor, and to study, and frequently, even, to engage in youthful

sports. In short, there is a lack of general vivacity and sprightliness in those who are much in the habit of *masturbation*.

I do not say that the whole of these symptoms are manifest in every case, nor that such symptoms cannot result from other causes; but I do say these symptoms are peculiar to those who are much addicted to the vice of masturbation. Indeed, venereal excesses of any kind, have a powerful and pernicious influence on the body and the mind; and when indulged in by the young, especially, its effects are frequently fearful.

CHAPTER II.

The Effects of Masturbation.

Greatly as this pernicious habit has been deprecated, and as bad as it has been considered, its effects upon the body, the mind and the morals, is decidedly more injurious than the public have any idea of; and there is reason to fear that even the medical profession, as a general thing, are not aware of its prejudicial influence.

This evil, when persisted in, wastes the vital energies, and prostrates the physical and mental powers. And such are the relations of the organs abused, to the whole of the faculties and functions of life, that the abuse of them, and especially so in childhood and youth, will, necessarily, sap the very foundation of life, effecting at the same time the dignity of manhood, the basis of moral principle, and the foundation of youthful vivacity and health. Speaking on this subject, says Mr. Graham,

"It impairs the intellectual and moral faculties, and debases the mind in the greatest degree; and causes the

most deep and lasting regret, which sometimes rises to the most pungent remorse and despair.

"It would seem as if God had written an instinctive law of remonstrance, in the innate moral sense, against this filthy vice; for, however ignorant the boy may be, of the moral character of the act, or of the physical and mental evils which result from it—though he may never have been told that it is wrong—yet every one who is guilty of it, feels an instinctive shame, and deep self-loathing, even in his secret solitude, after the unclean deed is done! and that youth has made no small progress in the depravity of his moral feelings, who has so silenced the dictates of natural modesty, that he can, without a blush of shame, pollute himself in the presence of another, even his most intimate companion."

1st. The STOMACH, being strongly connected with the great centre of the nerves of organic life, and thus peculiarly disposed to sympathise with any irritation or derangement of them, must of necessity be subject to suffer by every improper indulgence of the quinital organs. Hence the digestive functions would be among the first to suffer by the habit of self-pollution or venereal excess of any kind. However, it is no doubt frequently the case, that a pre-disposition of other organs to disease, may turn the current of decay, from the stomach to themselves.

The effect upon the STOMACH will render the appetite unsteady—the food will cause distress; there will be a faintness and sinking sensation

at the stomach; and frequently a palpitation or fluttering will be felt. In short, all the miseries of indigestion, perhaps, will be awarded to the miserable slave of masturbation.

2nd. The Bowels, also, throughout their entire extent, participate in the general evil. Their functions will become greatly impaired. The imperfect chime from the stomach, renders it impossible for the intestines to produce a nutrative and well digested chyle. Hence the general system is of necessity declining, for the want of proper nutrition, while cholics, costiveness, diarrhœa, and great debility are experienced by the bowels.

3d. The Heart, participating and sympathysing with the stomach, is subject to become exceedingly debilitated and affected. The circulation becomes languid, and the pulsation very feeble, consequently, palpitations, and death-like flutterings frequently occur; and the blood is not sufficiently oxygenated or renewed in the lungs: hence, paleness, chilliness, and a clammy coldness of the extremities ensue.

4th. The functions of the Skin are likewise greatly impaired. The capillary action is low

and imperfect, and hence the particles of exhausted matter that should be thrown off through the pores, are obstructed in their passage, which of course must, by an extra effort of nature, be thrown back upon the bowels and lungs, greatly injuring them; or, accumulating in masses, this dead matter produces swellings, ulcers, or perhaps a general cutaneous or skin disease; or, perhaps what is more likely, will result in bilious or pulmonary complaints.

5th. The Lungs, also, come in for a large share of the fearful harvest that is reaped from venereal excess, in any form, but especially the excesses of the young in masturbation. Consumption is a very common result of this vice; and especially where there is the least predisposition to pulmonary difficulty, the disease is rapidly hastened to a fatal issue: and in thousands of cases, where there *is* no constitutional pre-disposition, it is brought upon the votary of self-pollution, and runs a rapid and fatal career. Mr. Graham says:

"Sometimes the over excited and convulsed heart throws the blood into the lungs more rapidly than their debilitated, relaxed and distended vessels can dispose of it; and then follow great difficulties of breathing, distress-

ing apoplectic feelings, perhaps fainting, or rupture of the vessels, hemorrhage of the lungs, and gushing of blood from the mouth and nostrils. Sometimes acute inflammation, resulting in rapid change of structure, is suddenly induced; and, in other cases, with pulmonary congestion, a spasm of the heart arrests *its* action, so that it cannot receive the returning blood from the lungs, and sudden death ensues, by a species of pulmonary apoplexy."

Dr. Deslandes, a French physician says, "Consumption, or phthisis tubercularis, is in fact, one of the diseases caused most frequently by *onanism.* The act of venery—that power which has so much influence on the internal life of the tissues, and on the respiratory organs, [lungs] and which, to use Rullier's expression, seems to agitate the lungs—is commenced in most onanists exactly at that age when the chest enlarges in every direction, and which phthisis seems to prefer. "How many young persons," says Portal, in his work on phthisis pulmonalis, "have been victims to this unhappy passion! Physicians find those every day, who remain imbecile, or who are so enervated, physically and morally, that they barely drag along a miserable existence; others die with marasmus; and many with phthisis pulmonalis." In another work, the same author relates the case of a

young person, seventeen years old, who was addicted to masturbation, and who fell a victim to this disease. The young person, who had become much deformed, was affected with raising of blood, and soon died of phthisis. "It results from numerous well ascertained facts," says Faurnier, and Begni, "that those persons who indulge in onanism, are generally remarkable for the imperfect developement of their thorax, [chest] and for the promptitude with which the least exercise renders respiration difficult and hurried. Almost all these individuals contract chronic catarrhs, or more serious affections of the pulmonary organs; and finally perish in a complete state of phthisis."

Again, says the same author: "We have seen this affection, more frequently than any other, resulting from onanism. Among other instances, we would here mention that of a young man who died in 1833. This young man sustained himself so well in public debate, that he was placed, at the expense of government, in a public school. He was then sixteen years old; and his health, which had previously been good, now failed. He became pale, languished, and grew

thin, and this, too, although his appetite was keen, and his digestion excellent. Having my suspicions, and having communicated them to the patient, and also to other persons who could enlighten me, we were led to believe, from the answers made to me, that the too rapid growth of the body was the only cause of the state presented by the patient; and his state varied so little from that of health, that the young man answered me, that he was very well. I therefore simply directed him to take more exercise, and to be more free in his diet. His loss of flesh, however, and paleness continuing, his parents felt anxious about him. I examined his organs separately; I could find none presenting any marks of disease, or which could explain the general state of the patient. My first suspicions then returned; but on questioning him, the same answers were given. The patient, who had already seen an instance of the bad effects of onanism, in the person of his younger brother, seemed deeply impressed with the danger of his habit. He, however, continued to lose strength. One day, after taking more violent exercise than usual, he fainted away. At the same time a dry

cough supervened, to which the patient at first did not attend. This was the first symptom indicating an affection of any particular organ. This cough soon became more frequent; and, by means of auscultation, we found that the respiration, at the summit of one of the lungs, was imperfect. At this time, the patient avowed to his father his deplorable habit. This had been contracted at school; it had been indulged in for two years; and of late, much more frequently than before. His danger was fully pointed out to him; parents, friends, physicians, all conjured him to abandon his secret vice. Treatises on onanism were placed in his hands; and every attempt was made to arouse in him the feeling of self-preservation. He was terrified; but the power of the habit was so great, that he did not leave it off till consumption had progressed very far. Deep abscesses successively formed in his lungs; the expectoration soon became puralent and excessive. Night sweats and diarrhœa followed, and the patient died in a terrible state of marasmus and exhaustion."

6th. The Liver and Kidneys, also, are partakers in the general evil, in common with the

other organs. Their disordered functions, produce *jaundice, liver complaint, gravel, diabetes, great pain and weakness of the back, &c.;* and sometimes, after causing years of suffering and loathsome disease, the miserable subject finds relief only in a painful and premature death. The lining membrane of the neck of the bladder and the urethra, highly irritated and diseased, suffers a constant torture by the urinary evacuations, producing strangury, and finally ulcerations of the mucous surfaces, which is attended or followed by purulent discharges from the penis. The habit of masturbation in females, no doubt, often produces *fluor albus*, or *whites*, as it is generally called; all *incontinence of urine, strangary, prolapsus urteni*, or falling of the womb, &c., &c. Many, however, are doubtless afflicted with these complaints who may never have been addicted to this habit.

7th. Finally, the whole NERVOUS SYSTEM is sadly affected, and becomes the great medium of evil to all portions of the body—to the senses—sentiments—and to the faculties of the mind.

"Of all the special senses, the eyes more generally are the greatest sufferers from venereal abuses. They become

languid and dull, and lose their brightness and liveliness of expression, and assume a glassy and vacant appearance; and fall back into their sockets, and perhaps become red and inflamed, and weak and excessively sensible, so that wind, light, &c., irritate and distress them. The sight becomes feeble, obscure, cloudy, confused, and often is entirely lost; and utter blindness fills the rest of life with darkness and unavailing regret."

The SPINAL MARROW, the BRAIN, the MENTAL and MORAL FACULTIES, may, any of them, become the chief points of mischief, and involved in the general and special injuries accruing from the venereal excess. Fits and insanity often result from it; and, indeed, almost every form of disease.

The testimony of Dr. Alcott, on this point, is as follows:

"We believe that there is not a town in New England, whose bills of mortality, from year to year, are not greatly increased by this fearful and wipe-wasting scourge. We believe that a majority of our diseases and infirmities —our aches, our pains, and our deformities too—after the age of puberty, are either induced or aggravated in this way. Believe it, did we say? Would to Heaven this expression were as strong as the nature of the case and the character of the facts warrant. We *know* it is so, as well as we know any thing of mathematical demonstration, or the actual testimony of our senses.'

"SELF-POLLUTION," says Dr. Snow, of Boston, "is undoubtedly one of the most common causes of ill-health that can be found among the young men of this country. From the observations that I have been enabled to make,

I am satisfied that the practice is almost universal. Boys commence it at an early age; and the habit once formed, like that of intemperance, becomes almost unconquerable. In boarding-schools and colleges, it obtains oftentimes without an exception. Hence the many sickly students, and the many young men of the most brilliant and promising talents, who have broken their constitution and ruined their health, as it is said, 'by hard study!'"

The following interesting article is from the pen of Dr. Woodward, the distinguished Superintendent of the Massachusetts Lunatic Hospital, at Worcester:

"No cause is more influential in producing insanity, and in a special manner perpetuating the disease, than masturbation. The records of the institutions give an appalling catalogue of cases attributed to this cause; and yet such records do not show nearly all the cases which are justly ascribable to it. For it is so obscure, and so secret in its operation, that the friends in almost all cases are wholly ignorant of it. It is in a few cases, only, where the practice of the vice becomes shamefully notorious, that friends are willing to allow its agency in the production of any disease, particularly insanity; and yet no cause operates more directly upon the mind and the feeling. The mental energies are prostrated by the habit in innumerable cases, long before the delusions of insanity appear. Indeed, there are many cases in which insanity does not intervene between the incipient stages of that mental and physical imbecility, which comes early upon the victim of masturbation, and the most deplorable and hopeless idiocy, in which it frequently results.

"This is perhaps peculiar to this cause of idiocy. I know of no other which does not produce the ravings and illusions of insanity, or the gloomy musings, agitations and alarms of melancholy, before the mind is lost in idiot-

ism. But the victim of masturbation passes from one degree of imbecility to another, till all the powers of the system, mental, physical and moral, are blotted out for ever.

"This is not, however, always the case. In some individuals there is all the ravings of the most furious mania, or the deep and cruel torture of hapless melancholy before the mind is obliterated, and the energies of the system for ever prostrated.

"False hearing is often one of the first symptoms of insanity from this cause. The jealousy which had marked the character and conduct previously, now becomes greatly increased, and the suspicion of being the subject of remark and ridicule, is confirmed by hearing voices, opprobious accusations and censure, which confirm all former belief, and establish the truth of what was before only suspicion. With the jealousy and apprehension which had previously existed, the illusions always coincide, and some individual, often a female for whom there has been some attachment, becomes the object of particular suspicion. Her voice is heard in every direction —her image presents itself in his dreams. In his reveries, which are frequent, he sometimes suspects that all around him, or particular individuals, know his thoughts. He hears them utter, as they move about, what was passing at the same instant of time in his mind.

"There are circumstances attending the insanity from masturbation, which renders this the most distressing form of mental disease. I allude to the difficulty of breaking up the habit while laboring under this malady. When insanity is once produced by it, it is nearly hopeless, because the cause of disease is redoubled and generally perpetuated. The libidinous desires are generally increased, and the influence of self-restraint cannot be brought sufficiently into action to prevent the constant, daily, and I might say almost hourly recurrence of the practice. Thus the cause is perpetuated; and in spite of every effort, the disease increases, the powers of body

and mind fail together, and are lost in the most deplorable, hopeless, disgusting fatuity! And yet the practice is not abandoned. All the remaining energies of animal life seem to be concentrated in these organs, and all the remaining power of gratification left, is in the exercise of this no longer secret, but loathsome and beastly habit.

"Those cases of insanity arising from other known causes, in which masturbation is a symptom, are rendered more hopeless by this circumstance. It is a counteracting influence to all the means of cure employed, either moral or medicinal; and coinciding as it does with whatever other causes may have had an agency in producing disease, renders the case almost hopeless. Of the number of the insane that have come under the observation of the writer, (and that number is not small,) few, very few have recovered, who have been in the habit of this evil practice; and still fewer, I might say almost none, have recovered, in which insanity or idiocy has followed the train of symptoms enumerated in a former chapter, indicating the presence of the habit, and its debilitating influence upon the minds and bodies of the young.

"Most of the cases of insanity from this cause, commence early in life; even confirmed and hopeless idiocy has been the melancholy consequence, before the victim had reached his twentieth year.

"Of eighty males, insane, that have come under the observation of the writer, and who have been particularly examined and watched, with reference to ascertaining the proportion that practised masturbation, something more than a quarter were found to practice it; and in about ten per cent. a large proportion of which are idiotic, the disease is supposed to have arisen from this cause.

"The proportion is probably somewhat less in the other sex.

"On a former occasion I observed that the absolute abandonment of the practice, even in those whose minds were unaffected by insanity, was not easily effected. If no *voluntary* practice is continued, the habit may be so

far established, and the susceptibility to the complaint be so great, that slight irritation will produce it, and that often for a long time after the danger is appreciated, and the victory over the propensity achieved so far as cautiously avoiding known and intentional indulgence. Nocturnal pollution and involuntary emissions come from slight causes and trifling irritation, but perpetuate, for a long time, all the train of unhappy influences that have been heretofore detailed. The unfortunate subject of this detestable vice, whose mental energy is unimpared, and whose moral feelings are susceptible of impression, can be persuaded to abandon it, if the danger is set before him in its true light; but hundreds can bear me testimony, that the effects of it are long felt, and the involuntary excitement produced by dreams, lascivious companions, warm beds, and improper intercourse with corrupt society, has for a long time had its influence in retarding complete recovery to health. With the insane we can have no such hopes, and no such prospects of cure.

I do not pretend to say that calamities, to the extent above described, always, and necessarily result from the loathsome habit of masturbation, but I *do* say, and would have my youth readers feel assured, that it always impairs the constitution, produces more or less suffering, and shortens the period of human life. It renders the subject of it more vulnerable to those difficulties by which our health and happiness are endangered. He is much more liable to be affected by fatigue, cold, heat, sudden changes, &c., and hence the system cannot so effectually ward off the encroachments of disease, as it

otherwise could. The habit makes an inroad on the constitution, that, probably, can never be fully repaired.

But, there is another consideration, that to the mind of him who would lead a religious—a holy life, outweighs all the rest. The habit involves the terpitude of sin. Can that habit, which ruins the body, perverts the mind, and corrodes the deep fountains of moral virtue, and dispenses imbecility and disease on unborn multitudes, be an innocent one? Can that habit which begets and arms a depraved sensuality with an almost irresistible power, be indulged with impunity? I answer no!

That individual who is a slave to self-pollution, will frequently find himself almost involuntarily hurried into that adultery of the heart, which consists in a lascivious desire, and a look of lust. The thoughts will be constantly harrassed with lustful images, which will rush in like ghostly spectres, dessecrating his most consecrated seasons of devotion. His very dreams will be haunted by visions of depraved sensuality; and he will find himself, whether asleep or awake, driven captive at the will of lustful

concupiscence, which will rush in upon the soul like a mighty torrent. This will be the necessary result of a diseased association of the brain and genital organs, brought on by venereal excess. However much he may desire to have his thoughts centered upon holy things, he will constantly find himself tormented with images that burn, and thoughts that stain. Not only is he subject to be harrassed in mind, and tortured in his lustful desires, but he is also subject to be hurried, in an unguarded moment, into the commission of those acts, that in other moments his inmost feelings abhor, and for which he can "find no place for repentance, though he seek it carefully with tears."

Oh! how many there are, who, in early life, by the habit of masturbation, sow the seeds of untold sorrow, temptation, anguish and disease. Suffer me, my young reader, whoever you are, to entreat you to beware of this pernicious vice —to shun it as you would shun the hand of the assassin. Think not that I exaggerate, or give an overdrawn picture of this great evil. This would be impossible. It is an evil that has thrown itself out like the dark wing of a tem-

pest. It has moved, and *manhood* has melted away before it. It has taken its prey, and the nations have reason to mourn. It has suddenly cut off, in numberless instances, the hope of a fond mother, and the prospect of an indulgent father. And is it strange, that those who are acquainted with its nature, its tendency, and its results, should feel impelled to lift the warning voice? Would it not rather be strange, if, in view of its terrible consequences, I, or any one, should pass it by in silence? JUDGE YE!

CHAPTER III.

Reports of Cases.

B. L. was the youngest son of one of the first families of R. I was personally and intimately acquainted with this young man, and he gave promise of talents of a high order. His indulgence in self-pollution began to undermine his health in early life. Its effect upon his self-respect,—his modesty—his morals and his disposition became of a most serious character; and after a sad career, physically, morally, and mentally, he died of his terrible habit, at not much over twenty years of age.

R. A. was an only son, of apparently fine health, and great promise, at the age of fifteen. At about this time he became addicted to the habit of masturbation, in which he indulged to excess. The result was epiliptic fits, which increased with his increasing habit, till he became a *maniac*, and an IDIOT, and died in this deplorable state at less than thirty years of age. The

writer of this, was intimately acquainted with his case from its commencement.

Says Mary S. Gove, in her work on Physiology, "I became acquainted with a lovely and intellectual young man, who was a student in one of our theological seminaries. His health became so poor that he was obliged to leave the seminary and return to his friends. I saw him lose his reason and become a maniac. I was satisfied from all the symptoms in the case, that this sin was the cause of his wretched condition. He died without recovering his reason; and a friend of his, who was in the seminary with him, told me, after his decase, that he was indeed a victim of "SOLITARY VICE"; that it caused his death."

Within the past year, a number of parents have consulted the writer, professionally, in relation to the health of their children, in cases where the habit of masturbation has evidently been the cause of their decline. And the difficulty attending the treatment of such cases, arising from the general ignorance on the subject in regard to its injurious tendency, or, perhaps from the unwillingness of parents to believe

that such is the case, has induced the writer to prepare this little work. I have hardly ever given an opinion in such cases, but what it has been justified by careful inquiry and observation, however much my view of the case may have been spurned or disbelieved at first.

Dr. Hollick, speaking in reference to the subject, says:

"When in New York City, in the fall of 1844, I was accosted, after my lecture on this subject, by an old gentleman, who desired to speak to me in private. When we were alone he said to me, 'Doctor you are the first person I ever heard speak plainly on this evil practice, and as I am, unfortunately, aware, by sad experience, of the truth of your assertions, I felt much interested in your discourse, and resolved, if you thought fit, to communicate the details of a case with which I am but too familiar.' I thanked him for his confidence, and he gave me the following particulars:

"'He had a son, a fine healthy, lively child, aged eleven years old, whom he sent to a celebrated academy for young gentlemen, in the suburbs of a neighboring city. For the first six months he continued to receive the most flattering accounts of his son's progress, and was highly pleased with him when he returned home at the vacation. In a short time after he was surprised and grieved to hear that his health was failing, and that he was much more backward than formerly. Medical advice was sought immediately, and the assurance was given that there was nothing serious the matter, and that he would probably rally in a short time. The child kept on in this manner for twelve months longer, gradually becoming worse, until at last he was brought home. The father described his condition at this time as most distressing. He was

thin as a skeleton, weak in body and mind, and completely sunk in a deep despondency, from which nothing seemed permanently to rouse him. At last he took to his bed and died before he was thirteen. One night, however, while he was sick, the father was sitting up with him, and, being weary, leaned back in his chair with his eyes closed as if asleep. While in this state some motion of his son partially roused him, and through his half open eyes, he saw him in a situation which left no doubt that he was practising masturbation. The feelings of the father can better be conceived than described; being a man of information he partly knew the consequences of this vice, and immediately the idea rushed upon him that this was the cause of his son's sickness, and he at once resolved to discover if his suspicions were true. In the morning after, he began to talk with his child about his school-fellows, asking him as to their practices in play, &c.; and at last fixing his eyes upon him, he asked him if any ever practised this habit before him? The child burst into tears, and laid his head in his bosom. By a little gentle management he led him to confess that he had been addicted to this vice ever since he went to school, having been taught it by a playmate. Sometimes he practised it three or four times in a day. He also assured his father that there was not one he knew in the school but what did the same, it being considered a meritorious thing, and one which every boy should aim at. The poor fellow had become partly aware, himself, that it was causing his misery, and wished he had not done it, but it had become so much a part of his nature he could not refrain. The father felt as if a thunderbolt had broken upon him; here was his only child stricken before his eyes, and nobody suspecting the cause until it was too late. Said he to me, 'I hope my sad experience may enlighten some one else in time.'

"On another occasion an old man spoke to me after my lecture, and told me that he had a son who had long been in a desperate condition, whose cause of complaint

he had never been able to ascertain. 'But,' said he, 'from what you say of the effects of this practice, I think that must be it; I will, however, ascertain if possible immediately.' The next week I saw him again, and he told me that he had asked the medical man, who had his son in charge, whether he thought such was the case? and he immediately replied, 'Yes! now you have asked me I can tell you; it is that practice, and nothing else, which has brought your son to his present pitiable condition. I did not like to mention it to you before, for fear you might be, like many others, merely offended at me for speaking the truth; but since you ask, I presume you desire to know.' The young man was then so weak he could scarcely stand, and so much affected in his mind, that a person was kept with him continually, to prevent him committing suicide. I saw the father a little time after again, and he told me, with tears in his eyes, that his son had died in the mean time. 'Had it not been for you,' said he, 'I should never have known what killed him. I have now another child much younger, who might have died in the same way; but now I know the evil I trust I shall be able to prevent it.'

'Another case, somewhat similar, came under my notice, of a little girl, who had been taught the practice by a female servant with whom she slept. The mother fortunately discovered it, before the evil was gone too far, and by a proper course of moral and medical treatment, it was soon suppressed altogether, and she perfectly recovered.

"In one instance I knew a boarding school, where fourteen young females resided, which had to be entirely broken up, on account of this practice. One after another fell sick, and all eventually sent home. Previous to which, the Principal ascertained, from the confession of one among them, that for a length of time they had all been addicted to this vice. Nine out of these fourteen died in less than five years after!'

Mrs. Gove, again, in speaking of the prevalence of this vice among her own sex, remarks as follows:

"About eight years since, my mind was awakened to examine this subject, by the perusal of a medical work that described the effects of this vice when practised by females. This was the first intimation I had that the vice existed among our sex. Since that time I have had much evidence that it was fearfully common among them.

"There is reason to believe, that in nine cases out of ten, those unhappy females who are tenants of houses of ill-fame, have been victims of this vice in the first place. Were this the peculiar vice of the low and vulgar, there might be more excuse for the apathy and false delicacy that pervade the community respecting it. But it invades all ranks. Professed Christians are among its victims.

"Our boarding and day schools are sources of untold mischief. A short time since, two sisters, ladies of the first respectability, informed me that, when very young, they were put to a female boarding-school, where this vice prevailed, and the practice was explained to them. They were blessed with parents who were willing to converse with and warn their children, and they escaped the contamination."

The diseases resulting from this habit, are among the most insidious in their approaches, and the most difficult of cure. It does not bring its effects upon the subject like an avalanch! It gradually prostrates the citadel of life, and prepares the way for the approach of the enemy to

make its aggressions upon the weakest parts, and bring a premature death, under the name of some other disease. Hear the testimony of Dr. Woodward on this point:

"That the evil is wide-spread and exceedingly injurious, cannot be denied or doubted. A great number of the ills which come upon the young, at and after the age of puberty, arise from this habit, persisted in, so as to waste the vital energies and enervate the physical and mental powers of man.

"Nature designs that this drain upon the system should be reserved to mature age, and even then that it be made but sparingly. Sturdy manhood, in all its vigor, loses its energy and bends under the too frequent expenditure of this important secretion; and no age or condition will protect a man from the danger of unlimited indulgence, legally and naturally exercised.

"In the young, however, its influence is much more seriously felt; and even those who have indulged so cautiously as not to break down the health or the mind, cannot know how much their physical energy, mental vigor, and moral purity, have been affected by the indulgence.

"No cause is more effectual in producing insanity. The records of the institutions give an appalling catalogue of cases attributed to it."

A doctor in Brooklyn thus writes to the author of "Facts, &c., to Young Men":

"Brooklyn, Dec. 19, 1840.

"In my own practice, I think I have seen the following results of masturbation—involuntary emissions, prostration of strength, paralysis of the limbs, hysteria, epilepsy, strange nervous affections, dyspepsia, hypochon-

dria, spinal disease, pain and weakness in the back and limbs, costiveness—and, in fine, the long and dismal array of gastric, enteric, nervous and spinal affections, that are so complicated and difficult to manage."

Dr. J. A. Brown, of Providence, writes to the same source as follows:

"That it is an evil of vast magnitude, no physician, who has been in the habit of tracing *effects* to *causes*, can for a moment doubt. I, sir, could tell of hundreds who labor under incurable maladies, produced by this practice; and I do not believe that I have a better faculty for obtaining such information than many others, who are, and will be, dumb on this subject."

Read the following reports, which are taken, again, from the pen of Dr. Woodward:

"About two years ago, a young woman, aged 22 years, came under my care, in a state of the worst form of insanity. She was furious, noisy, filthy, and apparently nearly reduced to idiocy. She had been in this condition many months, and continued so for some time while with me. She was pale and bloodless, had but little appetite, frequently rejected her food, and was reduced in flesh and strength. Finding her one day more calm than usual, I hinted to her the subject of masturbation, and informed her that if she practised it she could not get well—if she abandoned it, she might. She did not deny the charge, and promised to follow my advice strictly. In two or three weeks from this time, she was perceptibly better; her mind improved as her health gained; and both were much better in the course of a few weeks. The recovery was very rapid in this case. At the end of six months she had excellent health, was quite fleshy, and became perfectly sane, and has continued so, as far as we have known, to this time."

"Not long since a case of periodical insanity came under my observation, the subject of which was a young lady. The disease had existed ten years without any material change. Suspecting that masturbation was the cause, I directed her mother to ascertain, if possible, and inform me. Some months after, I received intelligence that my patient was better, and that my suspicions of the habit were confirmed by the observations of her friends; the case is not without hope, although of so long standing, if the cause is removed.

"Three or four similar cases have been under my care recently, in which individuals of the same sex have been reduced to the same degraded state. They are now, and will continue to be while life remain, a melancholy spectacle of human misery, without mind, without delicacy or modesty, constantly harrassed by the most ungovernable passion, and under the influence of propensities, excited to morbid activity by a vice far more prevalent than has been supposed, with both sexes.

"A large proportion of the 'bed-ridden' cases, of which there are so many in the community, will be found to have originated in this cause. I never see a pale, sickly lad from 15 to 20, especially if he be shy, shame-faced and retiring, but what I suspect him of this vice; and among a hundred that I have questioned, I have rarely been mistaken."

The following cases are from "Facts for Young Men":

"A few years ago, I had under my care and instruction a most promising youth. His talents were of the highest order, and he bade fair to take a prominent stand among the first scholars of our country. He entered college, and was considered one of the first scholars of his class. It was soon perceived that his constitution was breaking down. Medicine did him but little good. Soon after he graduated he became melancholy, and

finally was deranged: and his friends were under the necessity of conveying him to a hospital. It was not until this event that the cause of his complaint was ascertained. It was evident that he had been in the constant habit of criminally indulging himself in secret. In a few months, he partially recovered, and visited his friends. He has, however, been sent to the hospital again. He is a most melancholy object, for in his lucid moments he is demented, a mere wreck of that superior genius which he once was. When I meet him in the street, I find that idiotic lascivious smile, which is common in those cases where the individual has been in the constant habit of beastly indulgence."

"A young man was under my care from one of the southern cities. He was an object of pity; he had become so accustomed to his vicious indulgence, that he has been known even at the *dinner table* to practise it. He was extremely irritable, and would often be taken in a fit, (spasms,) which would continue for hours. His physician did not understand his case, nor was I sensible at the time, that his bad habits had produced his partial insanity. He would often disclose some of his practices to his associates, when he was insane, which he would much regret when he had recovered his reason. I have understood that, since his return to his friends, he has but partially recovered. He is demented, and is unfit for the common avocations of life."

"Another young man, who was under my care not long since, is obliged to leave his studies, and is just going into a decline; and self-pollution is the cause. I have conversed with him, and he is sensible of his error, but I fear too late."

Mr. Graham, in his "Lectures to Young Men," describes some cases thus:

"The following case, which it is to be hoped is a very

rare one, affords a melancholy illustration of the text, and presents an occasion for remarks on the measures adapted to break up the evil habit.

"S. W. became initiated into the practice of self-pollution when very young; and before his friends suspected it, or himself was aware of the pernicious consequences, his health was destroyed and his constitution greatly impaired. When his symptoms became so plain and unequivocal, however, that they could no longer be mistaken, the cause of his sufferings was detected, and the ruinous character of his indulgence was faithfully and solemnly described to him. He was filled with horror and anguish at the disclosure, and promised never more to repeat the destructive practice. But this promise was as 'a rope of sand' before the power of his habit. He continued his unclean indulgence in spite of all the convictions of his own mind, and remonstrances of his conscience, and sufferings of his body. His friends expostulated, and entreated, and threatened—but all was in vain. He still went on in his transgression, and with tears and bitter anguish, declared that he had not the power to refrain from the loathsome act, though he knew that every repetition of it, was increasing his sufferings and hastening him to the grave. It was then proposed that he should consent to be manacled. He received the proposal with joy, and submitted to the confinement of his hands for several months. By this means, and by a salutary regimen of diet, exercise and moral treatment, he was restored to tolerable health. His friends now thinking his evil habit so completely broken up, and his health so far established, that it would be safe to set him at liberty, removed the manacles from his hands, and left him to control himself. But no sooner was he left alone, with the consciousness of his ability to renew his lewd indulgence, than he felt, as it were, compelled to yield to the temptation. He returned to the destructive practice—again destroyed his health, and filled his body with the most distressing and loathsome disease, and his

soul with anguish, and remorse, and despair;—and finally fell a victim to his transgression.

"In cases of actual insanity, and perhaps in some other instances, it may be advisable, because indispensably necessary, to have recourse to manacles and other means of taking away, for a season, the moral freedom of the unhappy transgressor, in regard to this practice. But as a general rule, every measure should be avoided by which his confidence in his power to govern himself, may, in any degree, be diminished: and on the other hand, in all cases, every thing should be done to inspire and increase that confidence as much as possible. This vice is of such a nature that where self-control is wanting, there is little ground to hope for permanent reformation. With proper management, however, self-control can in most cases be established, and the offender reclaimed."

"There is reason to believe that the ruinous practice of self-pollution prevails in our state prisons, penitentiaries, houses of correction, houses of reformation, &c., to a very serious extent, causing a considerable amount of disease and suffering, and demanding the earliest attention of all who have the care of these institutions.

"A gentleman who formerly had the care of the House of Reformation for boys in one of our large cities, and who became highly distinguished for his successful management of the institution, informs me that he found almost every boy committed to his care, to be in the practice of this vice.

"The chaplain of one of our state prisons writes thus, in a letter to a brother clergyman, on the subject before us:—'Self-pollution, I have reason to believe, is universal among prisoners. One of them, who has the means of forming a pretty correct judgment in the matter, told me he had no doubt that the prisoners were as regular in that practice as they were in taking their suppers. Some of them greatly injure their health by the indulgence. Not long since, as I was passing the cell of one of the

prisoners, just at twilight, he spoke to me with a low and tremulous voice and downcast look: 'I shan't live long,' said he; 'don't you see how poor I am growing? my flesh has almost all gone off my bones.' I observed that what he said was true. When I first knew him, he had a full and ruddy cheek;—now it was pale and sunken. I suspected the cause, and made inquiries accordingly. He confessed that he had become a slave to that vice, and feared it was doing him harm; but did not dare to speak to the doctor about it, and did not know that he could avoid it;—'for,' said he, 'I seem to have no power over myself. I awake from my sleep and find myself in the act. Three times a night, for weeks in succession, I have yielded to it; and frequently without being voluntary in the thing.' He evinced clearly the reciprocal influence between the brain and genital organs.

"There are several others in prison whom I know to be given up to a similar excess; and without exception, they all have that cadaverous look, bloodless lips, impaired memory, bodily weakness and pain, and those internal complaints, of which Mr. G. speaks in his lecture.

"I consider the polluted imagination, and sensual feelings of the convicts, to be among the greatest obstacles to the prevalence of religious truth among them. Revenge may die in the bosom—anger may pass away—cupidity may take its flight—and the thirst for intoxicating liquors no longer be felt by men in prison; but the reciprocal influence which sensual feelings and lascivious thoughts have upon each other, and the influence which both have upon the man, often grow stronger and stronger, even in the silence and solitude of the cell."

CHAPTER IV.

Confessions.

The following letters are taken from "Hints to the Young." Let those who doubt the horrible results of the vile practice of masturbation, read and ponder well the following. Let those who doubt the propriety of speaking out on the subject, do the same:—

"DEAR SIR:—Nothing but my deplorable situation would induce me to trespass upon your mind and patience in this esoteric manner. I am well aware that I ought to apologize for thus obtruding myself upon your notice, but I am equally confident that if you could realize the full extent of my misery, you would deem no other apology necessary. Trusting, therefore, in your well known sympathy and benevolence, I have ventured to lay before you my real condition, hoping that if it be in your power to relieve me, you will afford me the benefit of your medical skill and experience.

"From the age of fourteen till within two years past, (I am now twenty-three,) I indulged in the frequent habit of self-pollution, like too many others, unconscious of the evil I was bringing upon myself. During this period I was occasionally subject to involuntary emissions, but not so often as to cause any alarm, till about two years since, when the occurrence became so frequent as to cause me much uneasiness. I was then led to reflect seriously upon my course, and to read on the subject, and

resolved to abstain from my vile practice. This resolution had often been made before, but had as often been violated; for the strength of the habit of masturbation is such as none can estimate who has never been under its overpowering influence. At last, however, I was enabled to conquer it—but alas! too late—I was held an unwilling captive. The spontaneous emissions of semen still continued, and have occurred almost every night since that time, and sometimes twice in the same night, and even sometimes when running for a short distance, or in riding. Having endured so long under this blighting, withering curse, my constitution, naturally *very* strong, is broken down, and my mind, as well as body, completely enervated. I am haunted day and night with lascivious thoughts and dreams; suspicious of my friends and disgusted with myself. My memory has lost its power—unable to fix my attention—my mind is filled with terrible forebodings—fear of insanity, and at times it has cost me a continual effort to retain my reason. It is with difficulty that I walk, or stand, or even sit erect. An inclination to lie down and sleep, which desire I am sensible I have indulged too much:—my sleep never refreshes me;—I rise in the morning weak and weary, to drag out another miserable day. O how often have I wished for death, or rather oblivion, or any thing to terminate my woes. I have of late been much annoyed with constant little twitchings or spasms in various parts of my body, and frequently in my face. Sometimes, however, they are so violent as to affect the whole limb with a sudden convulsion.

But more particularly my right eye is rapidly failing; whether the disease be the cataract or amaurosis, I am at a loss to decide; it seems to have some of the peculiar characteristics of both. About two years ago I first noticed several small spots or bubbles floating before my eyes; these have gradually become larger and more numerous, until my eye-sight is very much clouded. These "cobwebs" constantly floating before my eyes when I

read, or walk, or look, annoy me excessively, and should they continue to increase at this rate, it cannot be many months before the result will be total loss of vision. My eyes, particularly in the morning, are affected with a burning sensation, which renders it almost impossible for me to use them for several minutes after rising—they seem to be full of sand;—the light is verv oppressive;—I usually keep the blind closed to my room at all times of the day.

"I am confident this disease of the eyes is the direct result of my venereal complaint, although a very respectable physician, to whom I stated my case about a year since, laughed at the idea of there being any connection between the two. With this exception I have suffered in silence, not knowing where to go for advice or assistance. I am now alone in this city—away from home, and in fact I am alone in the world—none to whom I dare communicate the cause of my distress, although I fear at times that my friends suspect it or something worse. Various reasons have conspired to prevent me from seeking medical aid:—the want of money to pay their charges—shame for my situation—a hope of recovery without the expense, which I can poorly afford; for I am without funds except a small salary, I am, for the present, receiving, and am in debt for my academical education, which I completed not long since at one of the New England colleges. I am looking forward to the profession of ——— O, I cannot name it, vile and guilty as I am. *Would to God I had known what I now know, when first tempted to this life, health, and soul-destroying vice.* I feel that I cannot hold out much longer, either mentally or physically. I have dieted myself—abstaining for a while from all animal food—then giving up tea and coffee. I experienced no benefit from the change, and resumed them. I have tried violent and moderate and no exercise, (the last of which is altogether more congenial to my feelings, although not to my natural temperament.) I have, for a few weeks past, been making use of Port

wine; but nothing seems to affect my disease. I have not, it is true, pursued any regular systematic course of regimen, for I have not known what to do. A few days since, I read a little tract on this subject, written, I believe, by you; but I find nothing in it *particularly* adapted to my case. If your experience in such unhappy cases can suggest any thing, do, sir, have pity on me. Can you give me any *particular* advice as to medicine, diet, and exercise, &c.? What shall I do for my eyes?

"Can you direct me to any physician in this city, from whose experience and skill I might hope for assistance? Had I better apply to an oculist, or will it do no good to doctor for my eyes, while my health is in such a state?

"If you condescend to notice this, do, dear sir, answer it as soon as your convenience will allow. I am expecting to leave town in about a fortnight, to be absent for several weeks, and if I could hear from you before leaving, it would be esteemed a great favor, and ever be gratefully remembered by an obliged sufferer.

"_____ _____"

The following are the author's very appropriate observations on the above letter:

"*Would to God I had known what I now know, when first tempted to pursue this life, health, and soul-destroying vice,*" is the emphatic language of this unhappy sufferer, whose physical distress, great as it is, is far less than his mental anguish. Such is the language of almost every young man, who seeks relief from his medical adviser from the disastrous consequences of indulgence in this evil habit. Is not this an effectual answer to the caviller who would never teach the young the danger of this vicious indulgence? I have never yet found the youth who did not commence this vice ignorant of its consequences, and even of its moral turpitude. I have rarely found one who retained his reason who did not abandom it on being admonished of its danger. Many an individual,

when insane, has been so impressed and satisfied of its impropriety and sinfulness, as to abandon it, and recover, while hundreds on whom moral influence could make no impression, go on recklessly to the ruin of mind and body.

Much experience has taught me that this is an important and necessary subject of education; that information should be diffused upon it; that the young should be admonished, and the whole community enlightened, so that no one shall himself suffer, or witness the ravages of the vice upon those around him, without being able to detect it, and avoid it before it be too late."

The following extract of a letter, dated August 22, 1838, from a young man who has for some months past had a distressing pain of the *eyes* and *head*, which has made him a great sufferer, and almost incapacitated him for business, shows the influence of self-pollution, and the evils which result from it in producing these disease: —

"When I was between *thirteen* and *fourteen* years of age, and I do not know but between *eleven* and *twelve*, I think, however, it is the latter, I was induced by a young man with whom I slept, to follow the practice of masturbation, though not without some threats on his part, and indeed was forced to by him. After a while I needed neither forcing nor threatening, but did it voluntarily from three to twelve times a week, till I was between seventeen and eighteen, when I became convinced it was sinful, and abandoned it; and never, to my knowledge, have practised it since, no, not even once, as I made it a matter of conscience; but I have had the spontaneous or involuntary emissions, and the nocturnal pollution more or less ever since, especially in lascivious dreams; and sometimes in female company, the involuntary emis-

sions have troubled me greatly. For years, I never harbored the thought that it was injuring my health; but since my eyes have troubled me, which is between two and three years, I have sometimes thought it might be owing to this cause. I am now about twenty-one years of age."

Here follow similar ones:

"DEAR SIR:—I have been laboring for four or five years past under a disease which has caused me much concern, but which, hitherto, has baffled all my efforts at removal. I am subject to nocturnal emissions of semen, which have occurred without the least interval, two or three times every night for several years past. The cause of these emissions was removed long ago. I have had recourse at various times during this period to the advice of many physicians, and have tried the remedies which they proposed, but all to no purpose. I have reduced my diet—living mostly on vegetables—exercised much in the open air—used the cold bath and friction of the skin—have taken tincture of iron—have taken astringent pills, camphor, &c., and have carefully avoided every excitement and irritation, mental and physical; but all in vain. I am at present, with only this exception, in perfect good health—but this is the bane of my existence; and if there are any means whatever by which I can rid my constitution of this curse, I am extremely anxious to know them. If, as soon as convenient, you will favor me with a line upon my case, you will very much oblige,

"Yours, &c."

"Eleventh mo. 5th, '37.

ESTEEMED FRIEND:—Nothing but self-diffidence, arising from a consideration of the character of the person I am about to address, has for some time prevented me from indulging the desire to do so, since the ends to be answered thereby are not only to add another to the

innumerable lessons of human nature and human misery with which the life of a physician so much abounds, and to afford to a sufferer the consolation of unbosoming himself, and of disclosing the evils which he has brought upon himself, and which nothing but the interposition of a Divine Providence can remove, but also to afford an opportunity of acknowledging the attention thou hast bestowed upon him. For my first acquaintance with thee I am indebted to ——, whose kindness and ingenuous conduct towards me I can never forget while I have the recollection of any thing. But the consciousness of having done all in your power must be your reward, as you cannot have the satisfaction of witnessing a successful effect of your exertions. My complaint refuses to yield to the most skilful treatment or the most efficacious remedies.

"All that I suspected or anticipated when I last saw thee, has since been realized; and having been repeatedly defeated, have neither faith or hope to make farther attempts. I am resigned to my fate, and entertain no saddening reflections on the past, or anxious thoughts for the future. There is, however, one consideration so entwined about the heart that it can never be obliterated while it continues to throb, that is, the relation which necessarily exists between me and the respectable family to which I belong, and the obligations I owe to my parents, who have passed the allotted age of man, and who need that attention which they could expect only from a son. But another and the greatest end I can hope to effect is, to prevent others from following my footsteps to ruin. This I think would be accomplished if thou could be prevailed on to write a book on the subject, and thus pour into the bosom of national youth that knowledge which would prevent its thousands, and tens of thousands, from reposing ignorantly and innocently under the seemingly safe but destructive shade of the Bohon Upas of Onanism, which is like the lap of Delilah, in which the mighty Sampson slumbered and was shorn of his power. A

physician, necessarily so familiar with distress, is not susceptible of the sympathy which one of my situation must feel for his fellows, but thou very well knowest, that if the sordid practice to which I allude does not destroy both the physical and mental powers of all who come under its influence, it is because they are both originally strong. It must at least relax and weaken the most robust body and vigorous intellect.

"Thou hast doubtless already suspected who I am from the description of my case; and as my name is unknown to thee, the addition of it will be useless. And as I must conclude as abruptly as I began, I trust that, should I exhibit a confidence unbecoming the occasion, thy benevolence will not fail to ascribe it to the ardor of my feelings.

In haste, but with due respect, I subscribe myself,

"Thy Friend."

To the writers of the last two preceeding letters, Dr. Woodward recommends marriage, but adds:

"Let me not be misunderstood; I do not recommend marriage to the masturbator; by no means. If he has not strength of principle to abandon the practice after he has learned its evil consequences, he should be doomed to perpetual celibacy, and not contaminate offspring with his moral pollution and physical imbecility. I have no advice for him but to abandon his evil practices and abstain from the degrading sin.

"To those who may have been led astray in youth, and when informed of the danger and satisfied of the sinfulness of the practice, have abandoned it, but have suffered from spontaneous emissions afterwards, I have, if other means fail, recommended marriage. I speak of it as a *remedy*, only. In all instances in which I have known of such advice being followed, the remedy has been effectual."

The following thrilling extract is from "Graham's Lectures to Young Men." It is the case of an amiable young man, who had injured himself by masturbation when young, without knowing its terrible consequences; but when he was made aware of its tendency, he abandoned it, and by great care, so far recovered from its effects as to marry. But his system was so much injured by it, that he was soon reduced to the condition here represented:

"Medical assistance was called, and the attempt was made to raise him by the free use of high-seasoned flesh-meat, porter, wine, &c., all of which served only to aggravate his sufferings, and plunge him deeper into darkness and despair. In this state of things I saw him. His misery exceeded all description. It was impossible to divert his mind from his affliction for a single moment. He continually exclaimed, in the most heart-rending tones—"I am lost! I am lost! I have destroyed myself! —I have committed the unpardonable sin; and nothing but perdition awaits me." When I tried to break the spell of his mind, and to arouse him to other thoughts, he replied, in the deepest dejection and despair—"It is of no use!—it is too late—too late!—I am a ruined man! —my soul is sealed to eternal perdition!—I have destroyed myself; and why should I live any longer, to heap up my already overflowing measure of wrath, and anguish, and horror? I cannot—I will not live!" With much difficulty, I succeeded in drawing out from him a disclosure of what he considered the cause of all his misery. He said that in his youth he had indulged in the awful sin of self-pollution, till it had ruined his constitution;

and that he was perfectly certain that, in so doing, he had committed the unpardonable sin. I strove in vain to convince him that his mind was extremely affected by the condition of his nervous system. "It is of no use," he replied, "I know that my damnation is sure! God will never forgive such abominable sins. There is no redemption—no hope for me; and I will live no longer in this state of despair and anguish." We were obliged to watch him every moment, to keep him from destroying his own life. And by abstracting from his diet his wine, porter, flesh, and every other heating and stimulating substance, and putting him strictly upon a very plain, unstimulating, farinaceous diet, together with the tepid bath in the evening, just before going to bed, and the cold shower bath in the morning, and free exercise in the open air, he was gradually restored to health of body and mind, and to the full enjoyment of himself, his family and his friends; and remained, as he had been before, a useful and much esteemed member of society, and a worthy member of a religious community"

Again, says Mr. Graham:

"A number of cases closely resembling the foregoing, have come to my knowledge since I have been a public lecturer. One gentleman, residing in a far distant city, consulted me by letter concerning his health. 'I am,' said he, 'the husband of a beautiful and fondly devoted young wife, and the father of two sweet babes, and possess an abundance of this world's goods; but in the midst of all these means of enjoyment and happiness, I am the most wretched of men. I am no longer able to be a husband nor a father; the powers of manhood have left me; my whole system is completely prostrated, and my mind is sunk into the most cheerless melancholy. For five years I have endured this unspeakable misery, and sought in vain for relief from physicians far and near. I beseech you, do not deceive me, but in the honesty of your soul, tell me frankly, is there any door of hope for

me? Must I, ere I have reached the meridian of life, wither into the grave; or is it possible, by any earthly means, for me to recover even a tolerable degree of health?'

"In my reply to him, I candidly told him what his symptoms indicated, and inquired if he had not been early and excessively addicted to the practice of self-pollution. In his second letter he said—'You have opened my eyes, and poured an astounding flood of light into my soul! You have disclosed to me the cause of all my suffering! All that you infer from my former letter is true. But why was there none to tell me this before? and why was I so blind as not myself to perceive it? Now I plainly discern the relation of all my sufferings to my own errors: and I see, when perhaps it is too late to be wise, that I have brought all my miseries upon myself.'"

I might make a large volume of such reports, but this is sufficient to give the reader an idea of the fearfulness of such a habit, and of venereal excess in any way. The heart shudders at the thought. Such cases are multiplying by thousands in our country—and the charnal house is being rapidly filled up from such sources, and in a great degree for the want of proper instruction on the subject.

CHAPTER V.

Venereal Excesses.

I would by no means have the readers of this little manual, suppose for a moment that masturbation is the only way in which there are abuses of the sexual passions.

The foregoing pages are as appropriate to the case of those who indulge in sexual excesses by natural intercourse, as to the Onanist. Mr. O. S. Fowler, in his work on the "Evil of Excessive Sexuality," discourses as follows:

"That promiscuous indulgence is most sinful, is evident from that terrible penalty affixed to its perpetration. To be eaten up by peacemeal, with sores and ulcers, nauseating and loathsome beyond description—to lose bone, and muscle, and nerve by inches, and literally *be eat up alive*, besides being simultaneously tortured with agony the most excruciating mortals can endure, affixes nature's seal of proportional moral turpitude upon its cause. Consequences thus direful show that their cause must be a sin proportionally aggravated. Quacks may essay to cure it, but its virulent poison still lurks in the veins for life. Calomel may give immediate relief, but the grave alone can entirely eradicate it. Sin ye who will, but suffer ye who sin. God is just, and but visits his violated law with mete retribution.

"Nor does this curse of curses cease with its author,

but is justly entailed upon his children, and his children's children, 'unto the third and fourth generations.' See yonder maimed and hobbling object of pity, his limbs distorted, his joints dislocated and racked with pain, his life tormented with running sores, his mind feeble, and passions ungovernable? All this is but the wages of his father's licentiousness. A physician once remarked to the author, that a more prolific source of scrofula, consumptions, and kindred affections did not probably exist, than this sin of parents.

"We thus see that *nature*, as well as the Bible, condemns licentiousness; so that disbelievers in the latter are yet bound by nature's inflexible laws to continence, except in wedlock. But a point thus self-evident, need not be urged. Beware then, oh passionate youth, how you commit this sin! Even though you neither 'fear God nor regard man,' yet at least regard your own happiness, and induce not so terrible a curse!

"But this is not the only form of sin assumed by this propensity. It invades married life, and sows the seeds of misery within the hallowed pale of wedlock. Reference is not now had to those who, though married, seek foreign indulgence; but to those who know their own legal companion only. This will surprise many who are married, because they think themselves entitled to any desired amount of indulgence. Far otherwise. Nature cares nothing, knows nothing about human enactments. Excessive indulgence between husband and wife produces all the consequences shown in the last chapter to result from excessive Amativeness. A miserable victim of connubial excess is hardly less miserable than the victim of licentiousness. A newly married husband once called upon a medical friend of the author, to prescribe for what he supposed to be venereal disease, contracted from his wife. Soon after, she called on the same errand; both accusing each other of having given the disease. He told both that their hymenial excess had inflamed and diseased both, and prescribed moderation.

"But, what stamps effectually the seal of nature's reprobation on excessive matrimonial indulgence, is its *destruction of the health of woman*. Is it not a most prolific cause of those distressing female complaints which *bury half our married women prematurely*, and seriously impair most of the balance? Testify, Drs. Sherwood, Banning, Hallick, Benjamin, and others, in this line of practice; are not these complaints alarmingly prevalent, and occasioned mainly by excessive indulgence? Do not thousands of our women die annually in consequence? Speak out, ye weakly, nervous wives, now dying by wretched inches."

Mr. Graham, speaking on this point, says:

"The evils arising from excesses between man and wife, are very far greater than is apprehended by even those who suffer them. It is no uncommon thing for a young couple to enter into wedlock in good health, and in due time to be blessed with one and perhaps two or three healthy and vigorous children; and afterwards they will have, in succession, two, three, four or five feeble and puny offspring, which will either be still-born or survive their birth but a few months, or at longest, but two or three years; and very probably during this time there will be several early abortions; and all the while the unfortunate wife will be afflicted with great debility and extensive functional derangement, and almost constantly suffer those numerous and distressing pains and ailments which result from sexual excesses. Very frequently, also, the husband becomes severely afflicted with distressing consequences. Such as debility, inflammation, swelling and excruciating pain of the spermatic cords, and also of the testicles, resulting, perhaps, in the necessity for castration, and sometimes in death, are often the fruits of connubial intemperance."

"The following extract from Jeremy Taylor's 'HOLY LIVING,' will show that this subject has occupied the

attention of that eminently pious and holy man, and that he maintained the same views in regard to connubial chastity.

"Chastity is that duty which was mystically intended by God in the law of circumcision. It is the circumcision of the heart, the cutting off all superfluity of naughtiness, and a suppression of all irregular desires in the matter of a sensual or carnal pleasure. I call all desires irregular and sinful that are not sanctified—1. By the holy institution, or by being within the protection of marriage; 2. By being within the order of nature; 3. By being within the moderation of christian modesty. Against the first are fornication, adultery, and all voluntary pollutions of either sex. Against the second are all unnatural lusts and incestuous mixtures. Against the third is all immoderate use of permitted beds.

"Chastity is that grace which forbids and restrains all these, keeping the body and soul pure in that state in which it is placed by God, whether of the single or of the married life. Chastity is either abstinence or continence; —abstinence in the unmarried, and continence of the married permissions.

"Concerning married persons, these particulars are useful to be observed:

"In their permissions and license, they must be sure to observe the order of nature and the ends of God. He is an ill husband, that uses his wife as a man treats a harlot, having no other end but pleasure. Concerning which, our best rule is, that, although in this, as in eating and drinking, there is an appetite to be satisfied, which cannot be done without pleasing that desire, yet, since that desire and satisfaction were intended by nature for other ends, they should never be separated from those ends, but always be joined with one or all of these ends—with a desire of children, or to avoid fornication and lascivious feelings, and thoughts, and temptations, *but never with a purpose, either in act or desire, to separate the sensuality from those ends which hallow it.* It is a duty of matrimo-

nial chastity, to be restrained and temperate in the use of lawful pleasures, concerning which, although no universal rule can antecedently be given to all persons, any more than to all bodies one portion of meat and drink; yet married persons are to estimate the degree of their license according to the following proportions:—1. That it be moderate, so as to consist with health; 2. That it be so ordered as not to be too expensive of time; 3. That when duty is demanded, it be always paid, (so far as in our power and election,) according to the foregoing measures; 4. That it be with a temperate affection, without violent, transporting desires, or too sensual applications; always remembering that marriage is a provision for the supply of the natural necessities of the body, *not for the artificial and procured appetites of the mind.* It is a sad truth that many married persons, thinking that the floodgates of liberty are set wide open, without measure or restraint, (so they all sail in that channel,) have felt the final rewards of intemperance and lust, by their unlawful usings of lawful permissions. Only let each of them be temperate, and both of them be modest."

CHAPTER VI.

The Remedy.

How often has the perishing victim of masturbation, and venereal excess, enquired in the anguish of his soul, *Is there no remedy—no respite from the penalty I have incurred by violating the laws of my nature? Is there* NO *light to shine through the dark cloud that overshadows me?*

Yes, there is a "Balm in Gilead." While there is life, there is hope; and let me say to the afflicted, you need not entirely despair, if you take the proper course, without delay. And I will here take occasion to say, in the language of Dr. Woodward:

"*Nothing short of total abstinence from the practice can save those who have become the victims of it.* In this indulgence, no half way course will ever subdue the disease, or remove the effect of the habit from the system. Total abstinence is the only remedy. If the constitution is not fatally impaired—if organic disease has not already taken place, this remedy will prove effectual, and must be adopted, especially in all cases in which the effects are visible, or the consequences cannot fail to be ultimately fatal.

"This means of cure may be seconded by others, which may be found necessary to remove the effects of the habit upon the physical system.

"After the practice of masturbation as a voluntary habit is entirely suspended, long and persevering efforts will be required to remove the effects from the system, and restore it to vigor and soundness. The individual himself must exercise great self-denial, and resolve to persevere with the means and overcome all obstacles that may be in his way, however formidable and difficult. The regimen to be adopted must be strictly adhered to on all occasions. As the inebriate probably would never conquer his appetite for alcoholic drink if he indulged once a month only—so in this habit, the occasional indulgence will thwart the whole plan of cure. The diet should be simple and nutritious; the exercise should be moderate and gentle; indulgence in bed should not be allowed, and the individual should always sleep alone. A mattrass is better than a soft bed. He should rise immediately upon waking, and never retire till the disposition to sleep comes strongly upon him. The cold bath is a valuable remedy; a sea bath is better, and the shower bath is often superior to either.

"All stimulating drinks, even strong tea and coffee, should be discarded; cider and wine are very pernicious—tobacco in all its forms not less so.

"The exercise should be such as to induce the most quiet repose, and never so great as to produce exhaustion and such fatigue as to prevent quiet rest.

"Labor is the best exercise, and if it can be in the open air it will be most beneficial. If in self-pollution or spontaneous emission, the patient be reduced beyond the power to labor, the case is little less than hopeless. Every care should be taken to make the sleep quiet and undisturbed.

"A mattrass is indispensable; feathers must always be avoided. The hours allotted to sleep should be short, and the patient should never retire till quite sleepy, and

should rise on waking, let the time be ever so short. If it be too early to dress and go to business, he should throw open his bed, walk his chamber, and thus insure quiet sleep again when he resumes his bed. Dreams almost always attend spontaneous emissions; these are only avoided by promoting quiet sleep. Light suppers greatly conduce to this. All excitements should be avoided in the evening, especially such company and conversation as is calculated to excite the propensities upon which this evil so greatly depends. If this course is not effectual to remove the habit, and the circumstances of the patient will admit of it, marriage should be the next step. On this remedy I rely with great confidence, believing it indispensable to the cure when other means fail. It is proper, always, under such circumstances, to consult a physician who has given his attention to the subject."

There is, perhaps, nothing that will more certainly relieve those who are affected by such excesses, than a plain and mostly vegetable diet, the cold bath—friction of the surface—healthful exercise in the open air, frequent bathing of the organs in cold water, &c. The bath may be taken by sponging off in cold water, following it immediately by wiping dry, and rubbing the surface briskly with a crash towel, or the flesh brush.

The functions of the skin and the circulation being especially deranged by such excesses, bathing is peculiarly adapted to restore the tone of one, and equilibrium of the other. The

whole person should be washed off every morning. The shower bath will be found excellent. But let such things be done expeditiously, and resort to brisk friction of the body as soon as the slightest chill is felt.

Cold fermentations around and below the small of the back, and even over the organs, frequently give great relief. This is done by laying a cloth of two or three thicknesses, wet in cold water, across the back, or to wrap it around the body, over which snugly put a dry bandage, and wear it thus through the night, following it with the bath and friction in the morning. This produces a healthy reaction, and perspiration, which greatly assists nature.

Let the patient scrupulously avoid all kinds of stimulants; such as *tea*, *coffee*, *wines*, *spirits*, *cordials*, tobacco in every shape, stimulating meats and condiments, and by patience and perseverance he may hope ultimately to be measurably restored, if his excesses have not been persisted in until some organic difficulty has been superinduced and confirmed; and even then his miseries may, perhaps, be greatly mitigated.

Galvanism, *Electro-Magnetism*, and the *Electro Magnetic Remedies*, frequently have an astonishing effect. But as a general thing let the patient rely upon a strict observance of the *laws* of life and health, as suggested above.

Although there is reason to hope for great relief, and, indeed, the restoration and enjoyment of comparative health, by a careful course of regimen and discipline, and the entire abandonment of such habits and excesses, yet the health will probably *never* be as good as it otherwise would have been. By such excesses something has been lost, that can never be regained; and the longer such excesses are indulged in, the greater will be the loss sustained, and if persisted in, *ruin* will be the inalienable result. It is a *fearful vortex* that lies in the path of the transgressor; and why will he not be persuaded to stop before his case is hopeless? But, I am satisfied that if the thrilling and blood-curdling facts presented in the foregoing pages, cannot hopefully affect him, all my pleadings will be useless. But be assured, reader, that if you cannot stop now, you never can. Every act of transgression is crowding you nearer the fatal

cataract; and your power of retracing your steps will be lessened. Therefore, STOP, and STOP NOW.

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"THE LITERARY EMPORIUM,—*a compendium of religious, literary, and philosophical knowledge.* New York: J. K. Wellman." The Numbers of this new work for January and February have been published, and the tables of contents are such as to do credit to the taste and judgment of the editor.

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From the Zion's Herald, Boston.

We have received No. 5 of this new monthly; it presents a fine table of contents, and is embellished by a superior engraving of Rev. John Summerfield.

From the Liberty Standard.

Several other numbers of this valuable monthly are received, and well sustain the character of the first. It should be valued in the family. Price $1.